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ABSTRACT

Young adults read not only to experience real-life problems, but also to "escape" from those problems. The two most popular types of novels available to teens are the contemporary realistic problem novel and the formula romance novel. A study examined the incidence of specific adolescent developmental tasks (adolescent problems/concerns) in 15 contemporary realistic fiction and 15 formula romance novels written for young adults between 1985 and 1992 and examined the books' readability levels. Using content analysis methodology and the application of the Fry Index of Readability, results indicated that, overall, the formula romance novels contained a higher incidence of adolescent developmental tasks than the realistic fiction novels, although the difference was not statistically significant. There was a significant difference between the two types of novels in the incidence of low-level developmental tasks (the formula romance novels had a higher incidence of occurrence), but no significant difference in the incidence of mid- or high-level tasks. There was no significant difference between the reading levels of the two types of novels. (Four tables of data are included; 38 references, a list of the novels studied, coding forms and instructions, and the Fry graph for estimating readability are attached.) (RS)

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A COMPARISON OF YOUNG ADULT NOVELS: DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS AND READABILITY

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Linda K. Roberts

October, 1992

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ABSTRACT

Young adults read not only to experience real-life problems, but also to "escape" from those problems. The two most popular types of novels available to teens are the contemporary realistic problem novel and the formula romance novel. It is important to have a knowledge of the content and readability levels of these materials in order to guide young adults toward quality literature. The specific research questions of this study were: 1) What is the incidence of specific adolescent developmental tasks in a selection of two types of novels written for young adults between 1985-1992: contemporary realistic fiction and formula romance novels? and 2) What are the readability levels of a selection of the two types of novels? Four hypotheses were tested related to the differences between the two types of novels in terms of incidence of developmental tasks and readability. Using content analysis methodology and the application of the Fry Index of Readability, it was found that overall, the formula romance novels contained a higher incidence of adolescent developmental tasks than the realistic fiction novels, although the difference was not significant at the .05 level. There was a significant difference between the two types of novels in the incidence of low-level developmental tasks (the formula romance novels had a higher incidence of occurrence), but no significant difference in the incidence of mid- or high-level tasks. There was no significant difference between the reading levels of the two types of novels.

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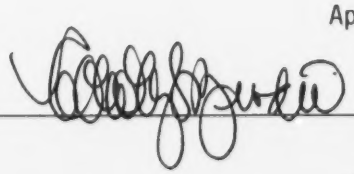
Adviser  Date 12/93

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of adolescence has been studied extensively over the years. Although many definitions of adolescence exist and many systems of classification have been applied to it, there is agreement that the period of adolescence is a time of transition. Although it occurs gradually over time and occurs at differing rates for each individual, the period is considered a passage from childhood to adulthood. It is characterized by physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development and growth. Adolescence is the time that human beings spend in the search for an identity; in adjusting to physical, mental, and emotional changes occurring in their bodies; in establishing new relationships; in acquiring a system of values; and preparing for economic and social independence (Erikson 1968; Havighurst 1972; Konopka 1973).

During this transitional period, young adults must develop their own patterns for adulthood within a context of what society expects of them. These societal expectations are conveyed in many ways--family, school, church, peers, government, and so on. Research has shown that literature reflects society and its values (Pilgrim 1968; Carlsen 1971). Donelson and Nilsen (1989), in discussing literature written specifically for young adults, postulate that the author acts as a mirror, absorbing what is important about life and then reflecting it back to the reader so that it can be examined more openly than real life could ever be. Young adults

can then vicariously experience situations and resolve conflicts that are not normally open to them in real life and through this vicarious experience begin to formulate their own value system, role identity and place within society.

If literature is to be used as a tool to help young adults move along this passage from childhood to adulthood, most adults concerned with assisting in this passage--parents, teachers, librarians and others--insist that the literature read by young adults be "quality literature". Researchers have established sets of criteria that distinguish "quality literature". In general, these criteria consist of novels that are seriously crafted; written by competent and dedicated writers; that have subtle characterizations, logical plot development and significant themes (Carlsen 1971). Others would add to this list exclusion of material that would be detrimental to the young people reading it. This "detrimental material" might include strong themes of sexuality, drug and alcohol abuse, violence and so on. Another concern is that the literature should portray a realistic rather than a stereotypical view of life. To this end, teachers, librarians and others have for years reviewed and developed lists of books that embody all of the criteria for quality literature. These lists of recommended books are then used in the classroom and in the library to guide young adults to reading materials considered to be appropriate for them.

Not all young adults like to read, however. When they do read, they don't always care to read what is "recommended" or required and they don't necessarily read to experience the numerous problems or conflicts present in an adolescent's life. Many studies have shown that adolescents, just

like adults, often read for pure entertainment or relaxation. This is especially true for the reluctant reader or the teenager that finds reading difficult. Adults and young adults sometimes desire to read "escape literature"-- fiction that is easy to read; not complex; which employs humor, action, dialog and few descriptive passages (Williams 1987). One category of literature that fits this description is the "formula" novel. Characteristics of formula novels include stock characters, situations, settings, attitudes and ideas which are manipulated with only slight variations from book to book (Carlsen 1971).

Since the early 1980's the most frequently-read category of this genre has been the paperback formula romance novel. As the paperback market for reprints of hardcover books escalated, publishers recognized the enormous profit potential of marketing directly to teenage consumers. They developed the concept of cheap, easily-accessible paperback formats tied to themes that would appeal to teens without offending teachers or parents. Guidelines issued to authors of this genre specifically indicate the exclusion of the "harsh realities" of life (Pollack 1981). Although there are formula novels written in other topic areas (mystery, sports, horror), there have been far more romance books written and romance novels are easily the largest market in this genre. The formula romance novels have come under heavy criticism because of the perceived lack of "literary quality"; the proliferation of negative sexual stereotypes (especially of women); and the concentration on romance and "getting a man" to the exclusion of all other interests (Kaye 1981). However, sales continue to escalate, accounting for 25% of all young adult book sales in some bookstores (Fong 1990).

There are defenders of the formula novel. Carlsen (1971) determined that it appeals to teen readers because of its recognizable pattern. Many librarians have noted that it brings young adults into the library and makes readers out of those that normally might not read at all. Stanek (1980) believes that formula literature is important because it represents the way cultures have embodied their social values and their own preoccupations in narrative form and views the formula novel as one form of popular culture enjoyed by teens (in addition to popular music, television, movies, etc.). Perhaps most importantly, research has indicated that formula romance novels do realistically reflect many of the problems faced by young people in their daily lives.

This study proposes to answer the following questions:

1. What is the incidence of adolescent problem/concerns (defined as specific adolescent developmental tasks) in a selection of two types of novels written for young adults: contemporary realistic problem novels which have been recommended for young adults by reputable reviewing sources and formula romance novels?
2. What are the readability levels of the two types of novels?

It is hoped that when adults charged with guiding the reading development of young adults have a better understanding of the content and reading levels of books written for and about young adults, they will feel more comfortable in recommending a variety of materials which will appeal to young adults at every interest and reading level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescence

The concept of adolescence has been defined in a number of ways, but traditionally has come to be recognized as the period between childhood and adulthood which is characterized by significant physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and growth. The age range of adolescence is considered to be approximately between twelve and eighteen years of age. Russell (1988) believes that the emergence of the concept of adolescence as we view it today is primarily a phenomenon of our 20th century industrial, technological society. Prior to that, in our agricultural society (and in many agrarian cultures today), there is no stage of "young adulthood". Children were considered adults at a specific age (usually around 12 years of age) and were "inducted" into adulthood via specific rituals (Cline and McBride 1983, 4). Today, the transition from childhood to adulthood is a prolonged one. Konopka (1973) stresses, however, that adolescence should not be considered merely as a passage, but as an important stage in itself. She states,

> Adolescents are growing, developing persons in a particular age group--not pre-adults, pre-parents, or pre-workers, but human beings, participating in the world around them (Konopka 1973, 298).

Adolescence is very much bound by the conventions of the society in which an individual lives. Not only do young adults need to be concerned with the changes occurring within themselves, they also need to be concerned about what society expects of them.

A number of researchers have developed theories regarding tasks which must be accomplished by a young adult in order to be considered a full adult. Erikson (1968) views adolescence as a time when young adults must achieve full ego identity and identifies specific tasks which must be accomplished along the way. He discusses the concept of a "crisis" which is a normative stage experienced by human beings at each stage in their development. This "crisis" is considered to be a turning point, or a critical moment when development must move one way or another. Havighurst (1972) built his theories on those of Erikson and others and postulates a series of developmental tasks which must be achieved by young adults. He defines a developmental task as "...a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks" (Havigurst 1972, 2). He goes on to say that there are "critical points" at which a human being is especially sensitive to achieving these tasks and it is at this critical point when an individual will be most successful at achieving them.

Havighurst defines adolescence as the years between twelve and eighteen and postulates that the developmental tasks at these ages are primarily physical and emotional, not intellectual. Havighurst's developmental tasks are:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes.

2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role.
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
5. Preparing for marriage and family life.
6. Preparing for an economic career.
7. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior.
8. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior (Havighurst 1972, 45-82).

In today's complex society, then, adolescents are devloping physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually; they are attempting to achieve and maintain a sense of identity. Their major concerns are to focus on the developmental tasks our society has deemed appropriate to a fully-functioning adult in that society (Cline and McBride 1983). These societal expectations will be conveyed in many ways--family, school, church, peers, government, mass media and literature.

The Importance of Reading and Young Adult Literature

The Importance of Reading

Carlsen (1971) has stated that reading expands life. He believes that

> ...Reading has become almost synonomous with civilization. One of the most important criteria in judging a nation is the percent of its people who can read. And one of the important criteria in judging an individual's cultural level is whether he does read (Carlsen 1971, 2).

Pilgrim and McAllister (1968) discussed the powerful effect that books have on the thoughts and actions of the reader. Although literature is not usually written for the primary purpose of solving problems or changing lives, reading an account of the way someone else solved a problem is one way of gaining insight into one's own problems. Often, those books which deal with problems of immediate concern to the reader tend to be more appealing than those which do not, particularly for young

people. Reading can help satisfy emotional needs, providing mind-broadening experiences not always available to children and young adults through everday contacts with others (Pilla 1987). Reading also provides an outlet for creativity and fantasy.

People read for many reasons and at many different levels. Most people move back and forth between levels simultaneously, reading what is of interest to them at any given time. Others never move beyond the initial level. Cline and McBride (1983) indicate that individuals go through several levels of reading growth. The first level is that of unconscious enjoyment. Children begin at this level and it is a crucial first step. Readers at this level enjoy what they read for no particular reason. Books at this level usually have a definite plot, stereotypical characters and plenty of action. This is often described as "escape fiction" at the young adult and adult level. The second step is self-conscious appreciation. The reader moves from what happens in the story to why it happens. Books at this level have logical character development; characters are controlled by human motives and they live with the consequences of their actions. Readers at this level might typically be young adults who are becoming more aware of the complexities in their own lives and are turning to comparable complexities in the literature they read. The final stage is conscious delight. Readers enjoy what they read and know why. A deeper feeling for humanity replaces a concern for self. This is considered to be the adult level of reading growth, but as stated previously, the mature reader will move between these levels depending on their reading motivation at any given time.

Carlsen (1971) states that adolescence is a time when an individual may devote more time to reading than at any other time. The adult reader often reads what (s)he finds comfortable at the end of the day. Most adults read in snatched moments of relaxation. Adolescence may be the only time in life when huge quantities of material is read at the full peak of energy (partially because of required reading in school). An adult's choice of reading material reflects his/her beliefs and attitudes. An adolescent is still searching for meaning and will look for it everywhere--classics, fantasy, erotica, teen magazines, comic books, young adult novels, and so on (Holland 1980). This is also a crucial period when potential readers stop reading. Pilla (1987) states that there are three factors which are crucial for the development and continuance of reading: 1) enjoyment of what one is reading; 2) availability of a variety of reading materials; and 3) readability of the material. Carlsen (1971), in discussing reading preferences of young adults, indicated that young people go through reading phases. These phases are probably related to the basic psychological problems the person is experiencing in growing up. Different people like different types of books and therefore it is important that all types of materials be available. Reading preferences of young adults are likely to be determined by chronological age (rather than mental age) and young adults will generally choose or reject books based on actual subject matter content (in other words, they will read books of great difficulty if the subject interests them). Boys and girls have different reading preferences. He further stipulates that enthusiasm for reading can be

stimulated. Pilgrim and McAllister (1968) concur and suggest that parents, teachers, librarians and other adults can guide young adults toward greater reading maturity, but it requires several tasks: 1) constant and extensive reading; 2) book evaluation; 3)knowledge of what adolescents are like (how and why they react as they do); and 4) sympathy for and knowledge of what young people generally choose to read (Pilgrim and McAllister 1968, 9-10).

Young Adult Literature

As early as the 16th century, books were written for children and young adults. However, literature of that period on through the end of the 18th century tended to be didactic in tone, written to instruct rather than to entertain. In the early 19th century, writers began to write adventure, fantasy and travel books; books about ordinary events in a young adult's life. In the late 19th century, "series" books began to appear. Written mostly for boys (the social mores for girls strictly limited what they could do), they were read voraciously by teens, but were severely criticized by teachers and librarians for their unrealistic plots and sexist and racial stereotyping. None of the series books were considered to be of "high literary quality", but they were influential in turning young people on to reading. These early novels--series novels or non-series novels--still tended to be didactic and were also sentimental in their treatment of "realistic problems". Throughout the 1940's and 1950's, young adult novels centered on "traditional" social behavior, with obvious moral lessons and virtuous protagonists. By the 1960's, however, young adult novels began to center on issues formerly "taboo"--drugs,

alcohol, and sexuality. More minority and handicapped characters appeared and characters tended to be introspective. The 1960's in America were turbulent, complex times, and the young adult literature of the time reflected that. Experts believe that young adult literature of the 1980's has "come of age". Protagonists are no longer stereotypes; human relationships are complex; there are no simplistic solutions (Cline and McBride 1983).

Holland (1980) defines adolescent literature as "whatever any adolescent happens to be reading at any time" (Holland 1980, 38). Donelson and Nilsen (1989) describe young adult literature as a mirror, absorbing what is important about life and then reflecting it back to the reader so that it can be examined more openly than real life could ever be. Young adults can then vicariously experience situations and resolve conflicts that are not normally open to them in real life and through this vicarious experience, begin to formulate their own value system, role identity and place within society. Weiner (1985) stresses that the recurrent themes of the most enduring and widely read adolescent literature contain elements of the developmental tasks described by Havighurst (1972), Erikson (1968) and Konopka (1973). Several researchers have examined various segments of adolescent literature for the presence of developmental tasks or teenage problem/concerns.

Bleich (1978) examined the psychological and social characteristics of adolescence in ten young adult novels. Five were written before 1960 and five were written after that date. The purpose of the study was to determine if the "new realism" in adolescent literature provided a more realistic picture of the psychological and social characteristics of

adolescence than earlier forms of the genre. Using content analysis, the author examined the ten novels to determine the following information: 1) To what extent did the main character(s) actively demonstrate processes of identity formation? (as defined by Erikson); 2) To what extent were social roles imposed and/or actively selected and pursued? (Using Havighurst's developmental tasks of adolescence); and 3) To what extent did adults control adolescent defining processes and social roles? Although the sample was very small and cannot be generalized to a larger study, Bleich did find that the five novels studied that were written after 1960 presented more realistic psychological portraits of the entire range of adolescent developmental tasks than did the novels written earlier.

D'Angelo (1989) also studied developmental tasks in adolescent literature, specifically in regard to the female protagonist. She analyzed ten adolescent novels published between 1945 and 1985 which had been awarded prizes based on merit. She, too, used content analysis and used Havighurst's developmental tasks as a basis for analysis. D'Angelo, however, modified Havighurst's tasks to specifically describe the female protagonists and classified the tasks into categories of low-level (establishment of autonomy), mid-level (psychosocial and psychosexual development) and high-level (future orientation) tasks. Again, her findings cannot be generalized to a larger population, but she did find evidence that the books written in the post-1980 period demonstrated a greater degree of adolescent development than those in the pre-1971 period. Female protagonists in the later group of novels attempted or achieved more of the middle and higher level tasks than the female characters in the earlier novels.

Both Bleich and D'Angelo demonstrated that from a historical perspective, the young adult literature written within the last ten to twenty years reflects a more accurate portrayal of adolescence and the problems/concerns associated with achieving adulthood in 20th century society.

Compton and Skelton (1982) examined fifteen realistic fiction novels written within the past fifteen years which featured main characters between the ages of ten and fourteen and which were written for the ten to fourteen year age group. Novels were recommended by college professors specializing in children's issues and then voted on by a sample of library-media specialists in middle schools throughout the United States in terms of those considered to be the most popular in terms of frequency of selection by young adults. Simultaneously, a list of twenty-six adolescent problem-concerns were developed by a panel of experts who were college professors teaching courses in early adolescent development. The final list of problem-concerns were divided into three categories: personal, intrafamily, and interpersonal. Using content analysis, the author examined the novels to determine the proportion of each novel devoted to the problem-concerns identified by the panel of professors. She was interested in knowing also whether adolescents select books in which characters deal with problems they themselves are likely to face. She found that each of the fifteen novels studied dealt with the identified problem-concerns. Since the novels selected for the study were chosen based on their popularity, the findings lend support to the theory that adolescents do select books dealing with problems they are likely to encounter in their own lives.

Because young adults tend to read literature that reflects their problems and concerns, there is often controversy over what kind of reading materials should be available and recommended for teenagers to read. Adolescence is a stage in life when values are being formed and internalized, so there are many in the field that feel the impact of poor quality, realistic fiction will have a tremendous effect on the formation of those values and therefore should be strictly controlled (Cline and McBride 1983). Beach (1985) refutes this belief, stating that adolescents bring to their reading a relatively well-defined set of values which have been formed by school, the family, church, etc. and it is unlikely that reading these books would result in any marked change in beliefs or behaviors. Rather, their attitudes are more likely to shape the meaning they derive from text, helping them become aware of how their own attitudes shape their perceptions of not only fictional characters but also the people around them.

Quality Literature vs. the Formula Novel

Carlsen (1971) states that a high quality book for young adults is seriously crafted; written by competent and dedicated writers; has subtle characterization; logical plot development; and significant themes (Carlsen 1971, 51). Mertz and England (1983) found ten characteristics to be dominant in quality adolescent fiction:

1. Adolescent fiction will involve a youthful protagonist.
2. Adolescent fiction often employs a point of view which presents the adolescent's interpretation of the events of the story.

3. Adolescent fiction is characterized by directness of exposition, dialogue and direct confrontation between principal characters.

4. Adolescent fiction is characterized by structural conventions.

5. The main characters are highly independent in thought, action and conflict resolution.

6. Adolescents are depicted as reaping the consequences of their actions and decisions.

7. Adolescent fiction will draw upon the author's sense of adolescent development and concomitant attention to the legitimate concerns of adolescents.

8. Adolescent fiction strives for relevance by attempting to mirror current societal attitudes and issues.

9. Adolescent fiction most often includes gradual, incremental and ultimately incomplete "growth to awareness" on the part of the central character.

10. Adolescent fiction is hopeful (Mertz and England 1983)

Although there is no doubt of the importance of guiding young adults toward quality literature and toward books that portray a realistic picture of their world, it is also important to realize that all readers, adults as well as young adults, often read merely for relaxation. This is the level of "unconscious enjoyment" discussed by Carlsen (1971). There is a whole category of literature called "escapist" fiction which, while it has been considered "acceptable" for adults to read, has created a storm of controversy in terms of young adult reading. The most popular type of escape fiction has been the "formula" novel. Carlsen (1971) has stated that the formula novel is not considered "quality" literature. It is created in a different fashion from the way "real" literature is produced. Often, highly regarded authors of young adult fiction will write both "quality" and formula fiction. Formula fiction features stock characters; situations, settings, attitudes and ideas which are manipulated with only slight variations from book to book.

Formula literature usually has a false tone which eventually becomes apparent to the sophisticated reader (Carlsen 1971, 31).

Formula literature has been criticized for its stereotypical plots and characters and its unrealistic portrayal of adolescent problems and concerns. Although written in several topic areas (sports, mystery, horror, romance), by far the most popular are the formula romance novels which claim to combine the joys and pains of first love with the difficulties of growing up (Ramsdell 1987, 215). Formula romance novels, particularly, have been criticized for their portrayal of the female protagonist as one who concentrates on "getting her man" over and above all else. The publishing industry early on realized the tremendous potential of appealing to the teenage consumer with the concept of inexpensive, easily accessible paperback formats tied to themes that appeal to teens (romance, mystery, horror, sports) without offending teachers or parents. Guidelines issued to authors of this genre specifically indicate the exclusion of the "harsh realities" of life (Pollack 1981). The concept has proven to be very successful. Sales continue to escalate, accounting for 25% of all young adult book sales in some bookstores (Fong 1990).

Defenders of the formula genre, however, believe that it is the formula itself which points to the popularity of the books. There is security in knowing how a book will turn out. Formula novels offer light escapism which takes young adults away from their crisis-prone lives and can be a pleasant, satisfying means of relaxation (Kaye 1980, 88). Many librarians have noted that these novels have made readers of young adults that ordinarily do not enjoy reading. They feel that if they can bring

the students into the library, they can gradually turn their taste from the formula literature to books with similar themes, but higher quality. Another advantage of the formula novel is its easy readability, making it especially popular with reluctant readers.

Carlsen (1971) stresses the appeal and the advantages of the formula novel:

1. It's cheap and easily accessible.
2. Patterned stories are easy to read (because of the pattern as well as the level of readability).
3. The story pattern is exactly like that of all folk literature--it moves from one peak of action to another without the buildup of information and motive--just like the tradition of oral storytelling.
4. Most importantly, there is a high degree of wish fulfillment and escapism. Teenagers succeed in every phase of life (Carlsen 1971, 35-36).

The disadvantage, according to Carlsen, is that formula novels often present a false picture of life and can be harmful to someone who never passes beyond this stage of reading growth.

Because of the popularity of the formula novel among young adults, several researchers have examined their content in relationship to the better quality, contemporary young adult novels. Bennett and Kuhn (1983) studied five romance series, written in the early eighties and sold by in-school book clubs. Two novels from each series were examined. Two major questions were addressed: 1) Do romance novels, sponsored by in-school book clubs, satisfy literary criteria acceptable to educators? and 2) Should they be recommended by teachers and librarians? Criteria examined included uniqueness, plot, narrative technique, broad appeal, characters, theme, world view, realistic ending, portrayal of human

emotion, ease of engaging reader's attention. The authors found that while the novels examined ranked very low in overall literary quality, they rated very high on criteria related exclusively to adolescent literature. They indicated that teenagers would find these novels interesting and easy reading (Bennett and Kuhn 1983, 42-44).

Kundin (1985) compared the treatment of adolescent "problem concerns" in formula romance fiction to the treatment of these problems in contemporary realistic fiction. She replicated the methodology and studied the same novels as those studied in the Compton/Skelton study mentioned previously, comparing those novels with a sample of sixteen formula romance novels. Using content analysis methodology, Kundin examined the novels for the proportion of each book devoted to each major adolescent problem-concern. Her findings indicated that formula romance fiction books compare favorably to contemporary realistic fiction for young adults. There was a great deal of consistency among the formula romance novels in terms of the problem-concerns present in the novels. This is indicative, perhaps, of the strictness of the formula by which these books are written. The formula romance novels centered more on interpersonal concerns, while the contemporary realistic fiction novels reflected a higher percentage of personal and intrafamily concerns. Kundin concluded that formula romance novels, like contemporary realistic fiction reflect many of the problems faced by young people in their daily lives. Young adult readers can identify with characters who are experiencing the problems they themselves are facing, but in the guise of escape reading (Kundin 1985, 366).

Stanek (1980) and Moffit (1987) both studied adolescent literature from the reader-response approach. Stanek surveyed school students from across the United States asking them to rank order the books they enjoyed reading and also to rank order their most pressing personal problems as they perceived them. He compiled a list of ten categories of real adolescent problems based on Havighurst's adolescent developmental tasks. He hypothesized that no significant relation exists between the fictional problems teens enjoy reading about and their perceived personal problems. The report on the research did not include specific information on research methodology used or an indepth discussion of the findings, but Stanek reported that, in fact, his hypothesis was supported. He found no relation between the adolescent problems portrayed in the novels and the real problems perceived by his sample. His findings refute those researchers that believe that adolescents always read books to help them solve their personal problems. Stanek also attempted to gather information on why adolescents selected the books they read. He found that recommendations from teachers and librarians often influenced their choices as well as mass media. Award-winning books tended to be promoted heavily. Another factor in their reading selection had to do with the fact that not all materials they wanted to read were available for them to read (in other words, many schools and/or libraries were not ordering the most popular books, particularly the formula books) (Stanek 1980, 51).

Moffit (1987) surveyed eighteen female adolescent readers of romance novels to discover if they perceived and enjoyed novels in ways appreciably different from other readers. Her findings indicated that

her sample read romance novels to get information on males and sexual technique; to escape their lives by identifying with the heroines and thereby feeling better about themselves; and to practice vicariously cultural experiences and social behaviors they have yet to experience.

Summary

In summary, adolescence is a stage of human development between childhood and adulthood characterized by physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Society imposes a set of expectations on young adults in that society, the accomplishment of which entitles them to the status of full adulthood. Adolescence is the period during which young people move toward the fulfillment of those societal expectations while simultaneously developing their own sense of identity within that society. Adolescents use many tools to assist them in this transition between childhood and adulthood. Family, school, church, government and other institutions influence this passage. Literature can be another tool. Researchers have indicated that literature is a mirror, absorbing what is important about life and society and reflecting it back to the reader so that it can be examined as openly as real life never can be. For that reason, the act of reading has been recognized as an important activity and many are concerned that the literature read by young adults be realistic and of top "quality". There are other researchers, however, that indicate that young adults are just beginning to mature in their reading development and need to experience all kinds of reading materials. In order to make lifelong readers of children, reading needs

to be enjoyable as well as instructive. "Escape" fiction, then, becomes as important to the teenage reader as "realistic" fiction. The formula novel has become the most popular form of "escape" fiction. While many teachers, librarians and other adults are concerned about the stock plots, stereotypical characters and un-realistic portrayal of teenage life which is typical of the formula novel, several researchers have demonstrated that these novels do depict the typical problems experienced by young adults in their everyday lives. While these novels do not meet any of the criteria for "quality" literature, they do provide an escape for young adults, allowing them the security of a predictable plot, easy readability and a happy ending.

More research is needed to examine the content of current young adult literature--both "quality" and "formula"--in order to guide not only the reading choices of young adults themselves, but also the adults who aid them in selecting their reading materials.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

This study will examine two types of young adult novels:

1. Contemporary realistic fiction novels published between 1985-1990 which have received at least two recommendations from current book review media (Booklist, The Book Report, School Library Journal, and VOYA) and
2. Formula romance novels which have been published between 1985-1992.

The two types of novels will be compared in terms of the presence or absence of specific adolescent developmental tasks developed by Robert Havighurst. Also, the study will examine the readability levels of both types of novels as measured by the Fry Index of Readability.

The specific research questions to be addressed are:

1. What is the incidence of specific developmental tasks in a selection of two types of novels written for young adults between 1985-1990: Contemporary realistic fiction novels and formula romance novels?
2. What are the readability levels of a selection of the two types of novels?

In addition, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. The contemporary realistic novels will contain a higher incidence overall of specific developmental tasks than the formula romance novels.
2. Formula romance novels will contain a higher incidence of the low-level developmental tasks (i.e. social context tasks such as developing peer relationships) than will the contemporary realistic novels.

3. Contemporary realistic novels will contain a higher incidence of the mid-level developmental tasks (i.e. practical level tasks such as economic independence and preparing for an occupation) than will the formula romance novels.

4. Contemporary realistic novels will contain a higher incidence of the high-level developmental tasks (i.e. abstract philosophies such as gaining values and ethics) than will the formula romance novels.

5. Formula romance novels will have lower readability levels than will the contemporary realistic novels.

The data gathered in this study will add to the body of literature available to help parents, teachers, and librarians make informed decisions regarding selection of reading materials and recommendations made to young adults about their reading preferences.

METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis methodology to compare the incidence of adolescent developmental tasks in two types of novels written for young adults. In addition, the novels were subjected to the Fry Index of Readability in order to determine their readability levels.

Sample

The two types of novels investigated were contemporary realistic fiction novels and formula romance novels written between 1985 and 1992. Since research studies have shown a difference in the frequency and presence of adolescent developmental tasks in books written pre-1980, this study controlled for the effect of bias due to prevalent social conditions in the era when a book is written by studying contemporary novels. A random sample of fifteen (15) contemporary realistic problem novels were drawn from the publication, Best Books for Junior High Readers, John T. Gillespie, ed.; R. R. Bowker, publisher; 1991 edition; section entitled "Fiction: Contemporary Life and Problems". This publication covers recommended material for readers who are approximately 12-15 years of age. In order for a book to be included in Best Books, at least two recommendations are required from the sources consulted. The reviewing sources used in this publication are Booklist, The Book Report, School Library Journal, and VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates) (See Appendix 1 for list of titles).

In order to find a sample of formula romance novels, the researcher consulted the book "Happily Ever After: A Guide to Reading Interests in Romance Fiction" (Ramsdell 1987). Ramsdell divides the series romances into four types: basic, reprint, theme, and interactive. She describes the basic series as "combining the joys and pains of first love with the difficulties of growing up" (Ramsdell 1987, 215). The researcher determined that the basic series romances were the category that most closely resembled the contemporary realistic fiction novels examined in this research project. Ramsdell also provides a list of publishers who publish the basic series romances. After consulting Books in Print Plus and local libraries and book stores, the researcher determined that the series "Sweet Dreams" published by Bantam had the greatest list of titles and were most likely to be available for purchase locally. A random selection of fifteen titles were chosen from the "Sweet Dreams" series (See Appendix 1 for list of titles).

Procedure/Instruments

The literature was examined for the frequency of adolescent developmental tasks present in the novels. The developmental tasks are those developed by Havighurst. They include:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes (i.e. to learn to work with others for a common purpose, disregarding personal feelings. The most powerful single influence is the power of group approval).

2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role (i.e. to accept and learn a socially approved adult masculine or feminine social role. The boy/girl must accept the idea of becoming a man/woman).

3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively (i.e. to become proud or at least tolerant of one's body; to use and protect one's body effectively and with personal satisfaction).

4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults (i.e. to develop affection for parents without dependence on them; to develop respect for older adults without dependence on them).

5. Preparing for marriage and family life (i.e. to develop a positive attitude toward family life and having children; to get the knowledge necessary for home management and child rearing).

6. Preparing for an economic career (i.e. to organize one's plans and energies in such a way to begin an orderly career; to feel able to make a living).

7. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior--developing a personal ideology (i.e. to form a set of values that are possible for realization; to develop a conscious purpose of realizing these values).

8. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior (i.e. to develop a social ideology; to participate as a responsible adult in the life of the community, region and nation; to take account of the values of society in one's personal behavior) (Havighurst 1972).

D'Angelo modified the tasks and classified them into three levels: the establishment of autonomy and social context (low level tasks, 1-3); practical skills and psychosocial and psychosexual development (mid-level tasks, 4-6); and future orientation and abstract philosophies (high-level tasks, 7-8) (D'Angelo 1989, 224-225). This study used her classification scheme, but not her modified categories of tasks.

The research technique of content analysis was used to examine the novels and gather data on them. Holsti (1969) describes content analysis in a variety of ways, but for the purposes of this study, the definition which was used is "...a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Holsti 1969, 3). A number of factors must be considered in order for it to be effective as a research methodology: validity, appropriate categories, appropriate recording and context units, and appropriate measurement techniques.

In order to be considered valid, the categories established for measurement must be measuring the concept(s) you are trying to measure. In this study, Havighurst's developmental tasks were the categories used for analysis. Havighurst's adolescent developmental tasks have been repeatedly and successfully used in studying the content of young adult literature and therefore can be considered valid categories.

Although a recording unit can be a single word or paragraph or sentence, the most useful unit is the theme (a single assertion about some subject). In this study, each developmental task was considered a theme. The coder indicated the frequency with which each of the eight themes occurred in the context units selected for each novel. The context unit can be the whole book, a defined episode, or even a single sentence or paragraph. A whole book would be too time-consuming and provide almost too much data. A single sentence or paragraph can be too small for a theme to be present. In this study, three selected episodes, randomly chosen from the beginning, middle, and end of the book served as the context unit. Each episode consisted of twelve pages and each page was examined for the presence of a theme (developmental task(s). The most widely used method of measuring content in literature is frequency. Frequency as a unit of measurement has been debated in terms of its validity. However, in most circles it has been accepted as a valid indicator of importance, particularly in descriptive and qualitative research. Frequency implies that every occurrence of a given category within the selected episodes is counted and each unit of content is accorded equal weight. This study examined the incidence (or frequency) of adolescent developmental tasks in the samples of the two types of novels. One limitation of frequency as a unit measure is its inability to

control for the intensity or quality of the message being studied. It simply counts the number of occurrences without any attempt to analyze the reasons behind the frequency or the nuances that might exist in the various occurences (See Appendix 2 for content analysis coding form and instructions).

Although the content or the subject matter is one of the primary factors determining reading preferences of young adults, readability is one factor which must be considered when recommending books for young adults in order to prevent possible boredom or frustration. Readability formulas give an indication of the difficulty of material based on form and not on content (Cline and McBride 1983). In general, they are easy to use, and a good tool for estimating text difficulty. A major drawback to the use of readability formulas is that the content of the novel is not tested. A student may be able to read the book, but may not comprehend the content of it. Since readability graphs assign an approximate grade level to the material, another drawback is that there is little agreement among professionals as to what grade level designations really mean. In order to use readability formulas effectively, professionals must also take into consideration the reader's motivation, interests and intelligence when guiding young adult reading choices. It is also important that the passages examined should be "typical of the style used in the book and not use dialogue" (Pilla 1987).

The readability formula chosen for this study was the Fry Index of Readability developed by Edward Fry. The Fry Index is easy to use and has been favorably compared to several other readability formulas for reliability and consistency. The Index is a readability graph in which

measurements are plotted on a graph which indicates approximate grade levels. Directions for using the graph are as follows:

1. Select three one-hundred word passages from near the beginning , middle and end of the book. Skip all proper nouns.

2. Count the total number of sentences in each hundred-word passage (estimating to nearest tenth of a sentence). Average these three numbers.

3. Count the total number of syllables in each hundred-word sample. There is a syllable for each vowel sound.

4. Plot on the graph the average number of sentences per hundred words and the average number of syllables per hundred words. Most plot points fall near the heavy curved line. Perpendicular lines mark off approximate grade level areas.

5. If great variability is encountered either in sentence length or in the syllable count for the three selections, then randomly select several more passages and average them in before plotting (Fry 1968, 514) (see Appendix 2 for readability coding form, instructions, and Fry Readability Graph).

In this study, the one hundred word passages were selected from the same episodes chosen for the content analysis.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Overall, there were 880 occurrences of adolescent developmental tasks in the sample of thirty young adult novels studied. Table 1 indicates the number of occurrences in each novel by task number and also indicates the readability level of each novel. The first hypothesis of the study stated that the contemporary realistic novels would contain a higher incidence of developmental tasks overall than would the formula romance novels. In fact, the formula romance novels actually contained a higher incidence overall of adolescent developmental tasks than did the realistic novels (see Table 2), although a t-test performed on the data indicated that this difference was not significant at the .05 level ($t= -1.81$; $p=.08$; $df=27$). Therefore the null cannot be rejected for hypothesis number 1.

Table 1.--Developmental Tasks and Readability Level for Each Novel

*Title	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Task 5	Task 6	Task 7	Task 8	Total	Readability Level
Contemporary Realistic Fiction Novels										
1	4	0	0	8	1	1	2	1	17	3
2	0	0	0	14	0	0	4	0	18	6
3	15	0	0	1	0	1	15	5	37	10
4	15	0	5	6	0	0	3	0	29	8
5	0	2	1	8	0	2	5	0	18	4
6	11	1	0	11	0	5	1	1	30	6
7	4	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	9	5
8	1	0	3	2	3	0	6	8	23	4
9	14	0	3	0	1	3	1	7	29	3
10	5	0	1	3	0	21	1	0	31	7
11	5	0	1	7	1	2	0	0	16	7
12	19	3	4	1	0	1	1	1	30	5
13	12	1	0	8	0	3	24	1	49	3
14	6	0	2	9	0	3	0	0	20	5
15	6	0	0	7	0	4	13	1	31	6
								TOTAL	387	
Formula Romance Novels										
16	25	0	8	4	0	4	0	0	41	5
17	26	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	27	4
18	15	0	0	0	0	3	2	10	30	3
19	4	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	10	4
20	29	0	2	2	0	5	0	1	39	6
21	23	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	26	3
22	20	0	3	7	0	11	2	1	44	7
23	17	0	0	3	0	6	0	0	26	5
24	12	0	0	0	0	3	0	10	25	4
25	25	0	1	7	0	1	0	0	34	6
26	12	3	0	8	0	7	0	0	30	7
27	32	1	2	4	0	5	0	0	44	5
28	14	0	0	5	0	4	0	10	33	7
29	27	0	6	2	0	0	9	0	44	4
30	17	0	4	2	16	1	0	0	40	3
								TOTAL	493	

*Numbers 1-30 in Title column refer to novel titles located in Appendix 1.

Table 2.--Developmental Tasks by Type of Novel

	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Realistic Fiction	387	25.8	9.64
Formula Romance	493	32.9	9.16

Hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 pertained to the developmental tasks categorized as low-, mid-, and high-level tasks. It was hypothesized that the formula romance novels would have a higher incidence of the low-level tasks than would the contemporary realistic fiction novels. It was then hypothesized that the contemporary realistic fiction novels would have a higher incidence of the mid- and high-level tasks than would the formula romance novels. Chi-square analysis supported hypothesis number 2. The formula romance novels did have a significantly higher incidence of low-level tasks than the realistic fiction novels (chisq=13.067; df=3; p=.05) (see Table 3). Although the realistic fiction novels did have a higher frequency of mid- and high-level tasks than did the formula romance novels, chi square analysis indicated that the differences were not significant at the .05 level (chisq=-1.929,8.8; df=2,4) (see Table 3).

Table 3.--Developmental Tasks by Task Level and Type of Novel

	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation
Low-Level			
Realistic Fiction	140	9.3	7.23
Formula Romance	329	21.9	8.88
Mid-Level			
Realistic Fiction	138	9.2	6.16
Formula Romance	114	7.6	5.93
High-Level			
Realistic Fiction	105	7.0	7.77
Formula Romance	50	3.3	4.51

The last hypothesis dealt with readability levels of the novels studied. It was hypothesized that formula romance novels would have lower

readability levels than the realistic fiction novels. In fact, the two types of novels had very similar reading levels. A t-test analysis of the data indicated no significant difference in readability between the two types of novels at the .05 level (t=.84; df=27; p=.84) (see Table 4).

Table 4.--Readability Levels by Type of Novel

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Realistic Fiction	5.5	1.93
Formula Romance	4.9	1.41

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As discussed previously in the literature review, a major controversy surrounding young adult novels is the quality of that literature. The teenage years are troubled years. Many young people stop reading then. If they do read, they often read materials that are not considered appropriate for them, particularly the commercialized, formulaic teenage romance novels. This study undertook to support other authors and researchers who have hypothesized that, in fact, the formula romance novels have many of the elements considered necessary for "quality adolescent fiction". These elements include: a youthful protagonist; adolescent's interpretation of the events of the story; directness of dialog, exposition and direct confrontation between principal characters; adolescents reap the consequences of their actions and decisions; draws upon the author's sense of adolescent development and concomitant attention to the legitimate concerns of adolescents; relevance to current societal attitudes and issues; "growth to awareness" on the part of the central character (Mertz and England 1983). As the researcher proceeded with the analysis of data, she found that the formula romances contained these elements as well as the contemporary realistic fiction novels. Carlsen (1971) and others also stipulate that "quality" adolescent literature should contain subtle characterization and complex and logical plot development. This is the area where the two types of novels examined in this study differed. The

researcher found the formula romance novels to be very simplistic in terms of plot and character development. As the title signifies, the romance novels are written according to a formula. All action takes place within the context of the romance that is occurring between the two main characters. Although the adolescent themes are present, they are not well-developed and neither are the characters.

As the data suggest, there are no significant differences in the frequency of adolescent developmental tasks between the two types of novels. The only exception to this is the higher incidence of low-level tasks present in the formula romance novels. Since the low-level tasks have to do with establishing mature relationships with peers of both sexes; group approval; concern over physical appearance; and learning/accepting a socially approved masculine or feminine social role, it is no surprise that these tasks would be present to a great degree in the formula romance novels. Most of the formula romance novels deal with establishing a romantic relationship and this is done in the context of the broader peer group. Physical appearance is a major concern of young adults when trying to establish a relationship with a member of the opposite sex or when trying to "fit in" with peers. In fact, it is due to the strong focus on Task number 1 in the formula romance novels (Achieving new and mature relations with age-mates of both sexes; considered a low-level task) that leads to the higher overall frequency of developmental tasks in the formula romance novels than in the realistic fiction novels (see Table 1). Although this difference is not statistically significant, it is contrary to the relationship hypothesized by the researcher in hypothesis number 1.

There is also no significant difference in readability levels between the two types of novels (hypothesis number 5). The average grade level for the realistic fiction titles is 5.5 (ranges from grade three through grade 10) and for the formula romance novels it is 4.9 (ranges from grade 3 through grade 7) (see Table 1). Not only do both types of novels examined in this study focus on themes of significance to young adults, they both cover a broad range of readability levels.

Although the sample of novels examined for this study is small, the implication of the results is that young adults can choose to read for relaxation or to escape or to come to terms with complex issues in their daily lives. No matter the reason for reading or the reading skill of the reader, there is a vast array of reading materials available to young adults that focus on issues of significance to them and which are compatible with the skill level of that reader.

CONCLUSION

This study supports the research of others (Compton and Skelton 1982; Bennett and Kuhn 1983; Kundin 1985; D'Angelo 1989) that young adult literature today focuses on themes of relevance to adolescents as expressed through the adolescent developmental tasks present in those novels. Further, this study supports the research indicating that the formula romance novel, although formulaic and simplistic in terms of plot and character development, contains many elements considered necessary to quality young adult literature. (Mertz and England 1983; Bennett and Kuhn 1983; Kundin 1985).

Teachers, librarians and other adults utilize a variety of tools when selecting or recommending reading materials for young adults. These materials include book reviews, lists of award-winning books, selection policies as well as their own expertise. Besides adult recommendation, young adults are exposed to reading materials in a variety of ways. Publishers create interest in books via attractive cover designs, flashy displays and mass media advertisement. Best-seller lists, teen book clubs, television or movie adaptations, and peer recommendation are other influences on young adult reading choices.

It is important for adults responsible for guiding the reading choices of adolescents to be familiar with all of the materials available for them to read including the content and readability levels of these materials.

Individual needs and interests of young adults need to be taken into account and the literature needs to be evaluated in terms of what kinds of experiences it can provide. In this way, reading and literature guidance car promote both a love for reading as well as the growth and development of the adolescent reader.

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APPENDIX 1

LIST OF NOVELS INCLUDED IN STUDY

LIST OF NOVELS INCLUDED IN STUDY

Contemporary Realistic Fiction

1. Rylant, Cynthia. A Kindness. New York: Orchard Books, 1988.
2. Hobbs, Will. Bearstone. New York: Atheneum, 1989.
3. Cormier, Robert. Beyond the Chocolate War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
4. Sauer, James. Hank. New York: Delacorte Press, 1990.
5. Bauer, Marion Dane. Like Mother, Like Daughter. New York: Clarion Books, 1985.
6. Jacoby, Alice. My Mother's Boyfriend and Me. New York: Dial Books, 1987.
7. Martin, Katherine. Night Riding. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
8. Lasky, Kathryn. Pageant. New York: Four Winds Press, 1986.
9. Mazer, Norma Fox. Silver. New York: Morrow Jr. Books, 1988.
10. Christian, Mary Blount. Singin' Someone Else's Song. New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1988.
11. Brodeur, Ruth Wallace. Steps in Time. New York: Atheneum, 1986.
12. Guccione, Leslie D. Tell Me How the Wind Sounds. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1989.
13. Pfeffer, Susan Beth. Turning Thirteen. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1988.
14. Ethridge, Kenneth E. Viola, Furgy, Bobbi, and Me. New York: Holiday House, 1989.
15. Collier, James Lincoln. The Winchesters. New York: Macmillan, 1988.

Formula Romance Novels (All were published by Bantam Books, New York as part of the "Sweet Dreams" Series).

16. Singleton, Linda Joy. Almost Perfect, 1992.
17. Kroeger, Kelly. Backstage Romance, 1992.

18. Lykken, Laurie. Cheating Heart, 1992.

19. South, Sheri Cobb. The Cinderella Game, 1992.

20. Bracale, Carla. Down with Love, 1991.

21. Bracale, Carla. Fair Weather Love, 1991.

22. Quin-Harkin, Janet. The Graduates, 1986.

23. Quin-Harkin, Janet. The Great Boy Chase, 1985.

24. Boies, Janice. Love on Strike, 1990.

25. O'Connell, June. Love on the Upbeat, 1992.

26. Hehl, Eileen. Lucky in Love, 1992.

27. Singleton, Linda Joy. Opposites Attract, 1991.

28. Headapohl, Bette R. Play Me a Love Song, 1992.

29. St. Pierre, Stephanie. Project Boyfriend, 1991.

30. McHugh, Elisabet. The Real Thing, 1991.

APPENDIX 2

CODING FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING FORM

TITLE OF BOOK_____AUTHOR_____

INCLUSIVE PAGE NUMBERS OF EPISODE 1_____2_____3_____

DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS	FREQUENCY EPISODE 1	EPISODE 2	EPISODE 3	TOTAL
1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes.				
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role				
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively				
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults				
5. Preparing for marriage and family life.				
6. Preparing for an economic career.				
7. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behavior--Developing an ideology.				
8. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.				

OVER

Please indicate below the page #, location on the page, and task # for each occurence of a developmental task as well as a brief description of the occurrence.

Episode	Page #	Location	Task #	Brief description

CODING INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS

1. Record the title and author of the book in the space provided on the coding form.

2. Randomly select three, 12-page passages from the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

3. Record the inclusive page numbers in the spaces provided on the top of the coding form. (Note: Each rater should code the same page numbers in the same books. When you pass books from one rater to another, indicate which page numbers you analyzed.)

4. Read each page of the selected 12-page passages. The page is the unit being analyzed. Analyze the page for the presence of adolescent developmental tasks as defined on the category sheets. Sometimes a whole page will consist of one task; sometimes a page will contain no tasks at all or a page may contain several tasks. Each page is a separate unit. Even if a certain task is continued onto the next page, count it again on the following page.

5. On the reverse side of the coding form, record the page number, the location on the page of the occurence (may be line number or paragraph number or top 1/3 of page, etc.); the number representing the developmental task being identified (1-8); and a brief rationale or description which will help you remember later why you identified that as a developmental task.

6. After coding all three episodes, count the number of times each task occurred in the episode and record those numbers in the appropriate spaces on the front of the coding form. Total the number of times each developmental task occurred in the portions of the book which were analyzed.

NOTE: Several of the tasks being studied are very similar and it will sometimes be difficult to decide in which category to place an occurence. Study the category descriptions closely. Once you have decided which category to select, note on the reverse of the coding form why you chose one category over another if it is not readily apparent.

Record only tasks which are being performed by the adolescent characters in the book. (i.e. if a parent is worrying over money or about finding a job or choosing a career, don't record it unless the adolescent must get a job as a result of that circumstance.)

Content Analysis Instructions
Page 2

Conversations between adolescents is one form of "Achieving...mature relations with age mates..." (Task #1). Instead of recording every conversation, analyze the content of the conversation and record it under the appropriate task. Or, record it if the conversation itself appears to be the achievement of Task #1.

CATEGORIES

1. **ACHIEVING NEW AND MORE MATURE RELATIONS WITH AGE-MATES OF BOTH SEXES**

   The goal: To learn to look upon girls as women and boys as men; to become an adult among adults; to learn to work with others for a common purpose disregarding personal feelings; to learn to lead without dominating.

   Concepts to include:
   - Sexual attraction
   - Social activities (conversing, playing games, athletics, dancing, etc.)
   - Peer approval--wearing, doing, thinking what peers do--conformity
   - Opposite of peer approval--situations where the protagonist is strongly individualistic
   - Group activities (clubs, school organizations, etc.)
   - Relationships between peers of opposite sex or same sex
   - Gangs, social clubs, fraternities/sororities

2. **ACHIEVING A MASCULINE OR FEMININE SOCIAL ROLE**

   The goal: To accept and learn a socially approved adult masculine or feminine social role.

   Concepts to include:
   - For girls, choosing between "traditional role" of wife/mother or opting for career or to do both
   - For boys, conflict between "traditional" macho male role vs more sensitive, caring role
   - Performing tasks which are traditionally role-related (i.e. boys cleaning house; girls mowing lawn).

3. **ACCEPTING ONE'S PHYSIQUE AND USING THE BODY EFFECTIVELY**

   The goal: To become proud, or at least tolerant, of one's body; to use and protect one's body effectively and with personal satisfaction.

   Concepts to include:
   - Concern over physical appearance or changes taking place as result of adolescence (crooked teeth, acne, obesity; hair color/texture/style, etc.)
   - Physical comparisons with peers (tallness/shortness; large breasts/small breasts; muscular/weak; thin/fat)
   - Personal adornment, fashion when referred to as improving physical appearance (vs reference to peer pressure; see Task #1)
   - Involvement in activities to improve appearance (i.e. athletics, exercise, dance) vs involvement for social reasons (See Task #1)

4. **ACHIEVING EMOTIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF PARENTS AND OTHER ADULTS**

The goal: To become free from childish dependence on parents; to develop affection for parents without dependence upon them; to develop respect for older adults without dependence upon them.

Concepts to include:

Rebellion against parental or other adult authority
Development of a relationship between an adolescent and a teacher, grandparent, or other adult
Discussion of relationship between parent(s) and adolescent
Student activism as it relates to gaining greater freedom of expression and behavior for young people (.e. in student newsletters; choice of subjects to take; administration of the school, etc.)
"Copping out" of school activities; dropping out of school; student lethargy
Adoption of "deviant" lifestyle
Inter-generational issues; generation gap

5. **PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE**

The goal: To develop a positive attitude toward family life and having children; and to get the knowledge necessary for home management and child rearing

Concepts to include:

Attitudes toward marriage and family life
Attitudes, interest in young children; in having children of their own
Attitudes toward divorce, separation, single-parenting; living together (as opposed to marriage); abortion
Activities geared toward learning about home management and child-rearing
Courtship, sexual issues in long-term relationships between the sexes which might eventually lead to marriage (as opposed to sexual attraction, developing relationships between the sexes as mentioned in Task #1)

6. **PREPARING FOR AN ECONOMIC CAREER**

The goal: To organize one's plans and energies in such a way as to begin an orderly career; to feel able to make a living.

Concepts to include:

Issues related to earning own money; finding a job; desire/need to earn money in order to purchase items not provided by parents
Planning/preparing for a career--discussion of career choices, schooling beyond high school; vocations/avocations; learning a skill or trade
Concern about economic independence

7. **ACQUIRING A SET OF VALUES AND AN ETHICAL SYSTEM AS A GUIDE TO BEHAVIOR--DEVELOPING AN IDEOLOGY**

The goal: Formation of a personal socio-politico-ethical ideology. Ideology may be defined as a coherent body of shared images, ideas, and ideals (can be based on formulated dogma, a political creed or a way of life) which provides a coherent orientation in space and time, in means and ends.

Concepts to include:

Value conflicts; analysis of personal values vs values held by parents, other adults, peers
Moral/ethical dilemmas
Interest in/discussion of/attitude toward religion/ethics/morality
Concern/conflict between "instumental/productive" economy and "aesthetic/humanistic" society where beauty and love are valued concepts--as these relate to social/political values
Discussion of ceremonies as instruments to inculcate values

8. **DESIRING AND ACHIEVING SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR**

The goal: To develop a social ideology; to participate as a responsible adult in the life of the community, region, and nation; to take account of the values of society in one's personal behavior.

Concepts to include:

Desire to think and act for what adolescent conceives to be the good of the community or larger social groups
Impatience with slowness of society/larger group to change/improve
Student activism in order to improve society (as opposed to desiring greater personal freedom; see Task #4). This may involve protest against war, against unjust race relations or treatment of minority groups, etc.
Patriotism; love of country
Disconnection from socio-political movements due to being disturbed about the ethical quality of society; "privatism"; non-commitment to socially-responsible behavior
Involvement in politics, student governance, community service
Interest in/participation in voting
Interaction with law enforcement

Categories based on:
Havighurst, Robert J. Developmental Tasks and Education, 3rd edition, revised. New York: David McKay Company, 1972.

READABILITY CODING FORM

TITLE OF BOOK_____AUTHOR_____

PAGE NUMBER, EPISODE 1_____2_____3_____

EPISODE 1: NUMBER of SENTENCES_____ NUMBER OF SYLLABLES_____

EPISODE 2: NUMBER OF SENTENCES_____ NUMBER OF SYLLABLES_____

EPISODE 3: NUMBER OF SENTENCES_____ NUMBER OF SYLLABLES_____

AVERAGE: NUMBER OF SENTENCES_____ NUMBER OF SYLLABLES_____

APPROXIMATE GRADE LEVEL_____ (Taken from Fry's Graph for Estimating Readability)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPUTING READABILITY LEVELS

1. Select three one-hundred word passages from near the beginning, middle and end of the book (these passages should be randomly selected from the 12-page passages chosen for the content analysis). Skip all proper nouns.

2. Count the total number of sentences in each hundred-word passage (estimating to nearest tenth of a sentence). Average these three numbers. Record the numbers and average in the spaces provided on the readability coding form.

3. Count the total number of syllables in each hundred-word sample. There is a syllable for each vowel sound. Record the numbers and average in the spaces provided on the readability coding form.

4. Plot on the Fry Graph for Estimating Readability the average number of sentences per hundred words and the average number of syllables per hundred words. Most plot points fall near the heavy curved line. Perpendicular lines mark off approximate grade level areas. Record the approximate grade level in the space provided on the readability coding form.

5. If great variability is encountered either in sentence length or in the syllable count for the three selections, then randomly select several more passages and average them in before plotting.

APPENDIX 3

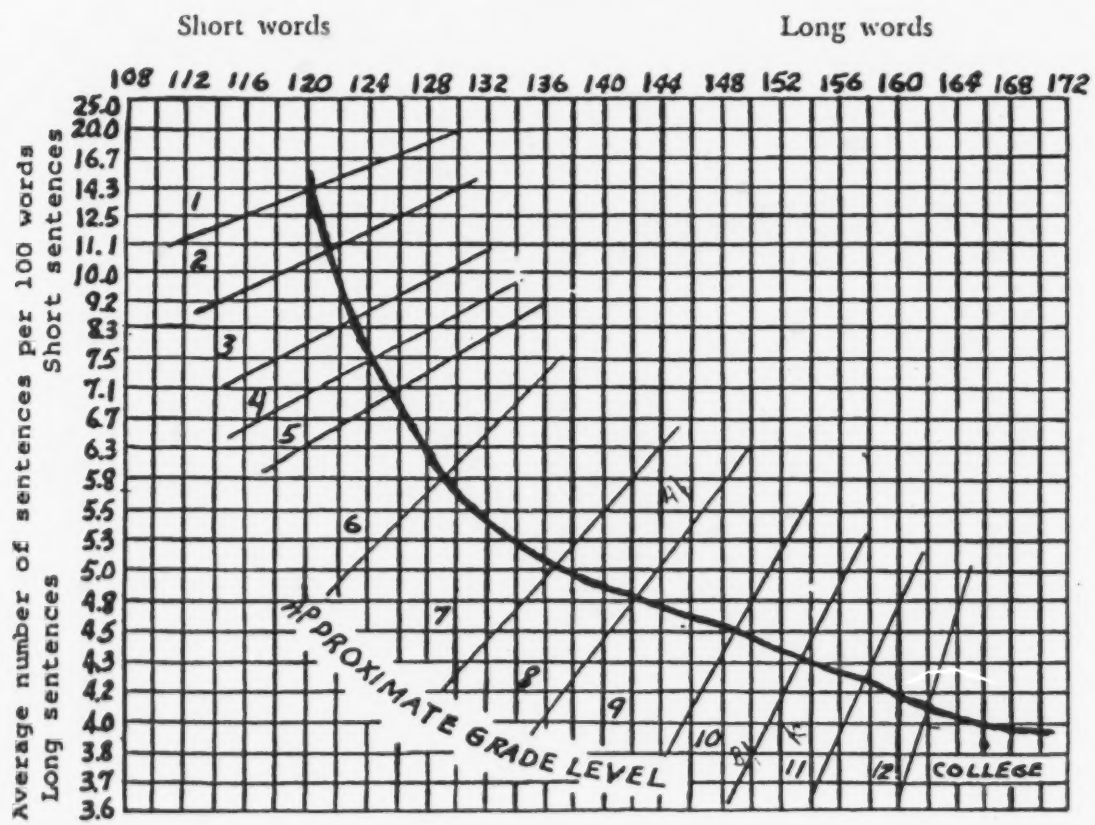
FRY GRAPH FOR ESTIMATING READABILITY

Plot:

Graph for Estimating Readability

by Edward Fry, Rutgers University Reading Center

Average number of syllables per 100 words



DIRECTIONS: Randomly select 3 one hundred word passages from a book or an article. Plot average number of syllables and average number of words per sentence on graph to determine area of readability level. Choose more passages per book if great variability is observed.

Note: The Readability Graph is not copyrighted. Anyone may reproduce it in any quantity, but the author and the editors would be pleased if this source were cited.